

where we at the same time can stand together with our neighbor, regardless of our own background, and all call ourselves Americans.

Hispanic Americans have much to be proud of and much to celebrate. I have said this before, but I am so proud to have been elected the first Cuban American in the Senate. I feel a great weight of responsibility in representing not only the Cuban-American community and the great State of Florida but in a way the entire Hispanic-American community in our country. I know my colleague from Colorado, Senator SALAZAR, must feel the same weight of responsibility. I am very honored to serve in this Senate with him.

As I like to say, in America, when you work hard and play by the rules, anything is possible. This year, Judge Alberto Gonzales was sworn in as our Attorney General.

Alberto Gonzales is the first Hispanic American to ever serve in one of the four elite Cabinet posts in Government—Defense, Treasury, State and Attorney General, which he now proudly occupies. He is an inspiration for our next generation. The second Cuban American to serve in the President's Cabinet also took office this year—Secretary Carlos Gutierrez at the Department of Commerce. I was proud to support both their nominations.

We have made great strides in breaking into the highest echelons of Government. And although I do not want to employ any litmus test of ethnicity, there would indeed be much to celebrate if our next Supreme Court nominee became the first Hispanic-American Justice of the Supreme Court.

Hispanic pride in our heritage has helped many look to their past for strength and use this strength to forge a better future for ourselves and our families in all facets of American life. Our achievements have greatly influenced America's policymaking, its economy, and the medical and artistic fields.

In fact, we should also point out that many Hispanic Americans proudly serve in our Armed Forces during this time of need. In fact, many have given their last measure of sacrifice, while others have suffered serious injuries.

But moving to other fields, now-deceased Cuban-American business leader and former chief executive officer of Coca-Cola Roberto Goizueta climbed the corporate ranks and helped Coca-Cola remain one of the premier brands around the world. Nobel Prize winner Severo Ochoa discovered the process that allows humans to create RNA in a test tube.

My close and personal friend, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, became the first Hispanic-American woman and first Cuban-American to be elected to the U.S. Congress. And within the artistic field, Brazilian artist Romero Britto, whose concern for the youth of the world, combined with social and political sources, has had his work appear in over 60 national and international publications.

Just like throughout the Nation, the Hispanic community within Florida continues to grow rapidly, and our creativity and ingenuity keep contributing to American culture. Hispanic American and owner of NGI Solutions, Martha Korman, is making significant economic contributions to the greater Tampa area.

Puerto Ricans, like Orange County Commissioner Mildred Fernandez, climbed the ranks and is working to encourage homeownership and growth of small businesses in the Orlando region.

Like many other Hispanics, Cuban-American Gus Machado began with nothing but a dream and dedicated himself to his business and his community, making him today the owner of the number one Ford car dealerships in the Miami area. In Jacksonville, FL, Dr. Javier Garcia-Bengochea made his mark as the innovator of several instruments and systems used to improve spinal surgeries.

And in Florida, just this week, a young man named Marco Rubio was named the first Cuban-American Speaker in the Florida House of Representatives, and, I might add, the first Hispanic American. I know that he is going to be a great leader and voice for the State of Florida, and a great role model for our next generation of Hispanic Americans who want to make a difference.

We are proud to be Americans. We gladly stand together with all Americans of all races, creeds, and beliefs in this great country that we call home.

Our goal in observing Hispanic Heritage Month is not to set ourselves apart, but to ask our fellow citizens to join us in celebrating our culture, our heritage, and our achievements.

With great pride we celebrate the pioneers in our Nation and in Florida during this National Hispanic Heritage Month.

We pay tribute to America's diversity and honor the countless contributions Hispanics have made throughout the history of this great country.

And finally, we celebrate the values of the Hispanic-American community—family, faith, liberty, love of this country and love of our roots.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, it has been 3 weeks since Hurricane

Katrina came ashore bringing with her a wide swath of damage. Her winds whipped structures to devastation, her rains destroyed thousands of agricultural crops, and, sadly, the force of this storm resulted in death.

While I rise to speak of Hurricane Katrina, I do want to focus my remarks on the devastation this storm brought to the State of Florida. We all know of the devastation on the Gulf Coast States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Before that, Katrina paid a costly and deadly visit to the State of Florida. Florida suffered 14 deaths and over \$1 billion in damages.

The Governor declared a state of emergency and evacuations took place. As you may recall, last year, Florida was visited by four serious hurricanes. By the time Katrina hit, we already had received over 150 percent of the normal rainfall for the year. And more rain brought about a substantial amount of flooding.

Before Katrina came to Florida, we had been visited by, as I said, four hurricanes last year. Over 10 percent of Florida's homes were damaged. The storm displaced tens of thousands of people into shelters, and today over 20,000 Floridians are still living in some form of transitional housing.

The backlog of roof repair is so severe that we are sending our children to schools that are developing mold problems. Whole sectors of our agricultural industry are devastated. Frankly, it will take years to replant and nourish those crops.

I wish to take a few moments to mention that even though the people of my State are still recovering from the effects of Katrina and Dennis and Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne—even though folks are still living in trailers outside of their homes that have blue tarps on their roofs, Floridians are proudly pitching in to help the people of the gulf coast region.

Sarasota, FL, is sending teams of 140 trained Red Cross volunteers in 2-week cycles and in some cases longer than that. These volunteers are headed to the very areas where evacuees are streaming out. There is no power, no clean water, no hot showers. They are bringing evacuees back with them to Sarasota County—over 300 so far.

Early this week, I had occasion to visit the Red Cross center in Orlando. Over 200 people are volunteering their services there, as hundreds and expected thousands of evacuees are coming into that central Florida area, where they are finding that the hotel industry has made arrangements for them to receive temporary housing in the area of many hotels, and, at the same time, the community is pouring out their love and their care in helping find jobs and dealing with issues of physical as well as mental health, as well as incorporating children into the school system.

The Tampa Incident Management Group has sent 22 members to Hancock County, MS, where they have worked

16-hour days for 7 days. The group included emergency management personnel, firefighters, logistical support, public information officers, police, and crisis counselors. One of the members of the Hardee County EOC, Mr. Richard Shepard, says he felt a responsibility to go to Mississippi because he needed to give something back for all the help he had received last year.

The South Florida Urban Search and Rescue Team, comprised of 80 firefighters from agencies throughout Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, returned home after spending nearly 2 weeks helping Hurricane Katrina victims in the gulf coast.

A group of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute ophthalmologists is heading to Baton Rouge this week aboard the institute's 40-foot Vision Van to treat displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who have lost eyeglasses and suffered other vision problems because of the storm.

The Panama City Boatmen's Association sent a three-truck convoy to Louisiana and Mississippi. Among the supplies: 150 cases of water, 80 cases of Gatorade, and 10 large bags of dog and cat food because the evacuees said they had something to eat, but their pets were literally starving.

Similar stories can be heard from throughout the State of Florida. Members of our Armed Forces and our National Guard have also answered the call and sought to help. But I want to particularly talk about a Florida resident and Navy pilot. LT J.G. Bale Dalton is a member of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 21—the Blackjack Squadron out of San Diego. When the call came through that hurricane relief was needed, his squadron flew helicopters across the country in order to be there in time for them to help. Now his father, who is my dear and long-time friend—currently my general counsel—Skip Dalton, has allowed me to read a little bit from his communications in those first few frantic days.

Writes LT J.G. Bale Dalton, on September 3:

My first flight into New Orleans was incredibly hectic. We went due east from Pensacola, so I was not able to see any of the Mississippi coast. The scene was chaos. Hardly anyone was able to get into the city on the ground, and the water was still rising. Helicopters from all services and even civilians were operating in the area, rescuing people and bringing food and supplies to rally points.

An airborne command and control element P-3 was tasking airplanes as fast as they could, but most often they were not able to give more than a GPS coordinate and a "good luck."

Another entry from September 3:

We were sent to a nursing home to remove what we thought were invalid older people. What we found was a small island of land with a field large enough to land three helicopters around what used to be a nursing home. We moved approximately 50 people—all families that were directed by New Orleans police to that spot.

September 4:

No rest for the weary. After returning to work with about five hours of rest (not sleep, just time from landing to briefing again) we again began to build a picture of what was going on.

People that had been stranded since the day the storm hit were beginning to come out of the woodwork. It was obvious that the first priority was to save people from the rising tides.

I went back into New Orleans later that day with a mission to find fire buckets and begin putting out fires.

Here is another entry from later that day:

We attempted to hoist people from an apartment complex into our helicopter, but were refused when they saw an ambulance a few blocks away that they were going to try to swim to.

Hard to understand for me, but I am sure the thought of being hoisted up on a wire to a helicopter is a scary prospect for most people. We moved from that area to an affected area in the northern part of the city to begin evacuating another group of people gathered by the police. We landed on a tennis court to get these people. They had not had food or water for five days.

I could go on and on with stories of Floridians helping out in the gulf coast, providing relief, aid, assistance, and, as you heard in the case of Navy LT J.G. Bale Dalton, rescuing people from the rising tides. But dramatic as these stories are, they are not unusual. This is what America is all about. If there is a need, Americans are there to help.

Given the impact of the stories and images of the devastation, I understand how our hearts and minds are turned to these current problems. But I am humbly here to ask that we simply do not overlook the fact that there has been a lot of suffering in Florida, that we, too, have suffered significant losses as a result of four very difficult hurricanes last year—an unprecedented number of major hurricanes to hit, crisscrossing the State of Florida—only to be revisited again by Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina this year. The extent of hurricane damage from last year was severe. In fact, we continue to try to dig out from under it.

Affordable long-term housing is one of the serious problems we are facing in Florida not only because of so much housing stock, particularly the affordable type, that was damaged last year, but now with the influx of evacuees into the State, some real long-term problems are beginning to present themselves. I have contacted the President and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. I have talked with FEMA and my colleagues in the Senate. We have received some measure of assistance, but we must continue to look forward to the time when all Floridians will be made whole and when life will begin to be normal again for all Floridians.

Katrina did pay us a devastating visit in the early part of that storm. So while we continue to pour our hearts out to those in the gulf coast, I do have to hope that the people of Florida will not be forgotten, as we seek to make all of the necessary decisions for the relief and recovery not only short term

and medium term, but where Florida is now in the long term, when the needs of long-term housing, the needs of long-term health care problems, the needs of reconstruction of public facilities, such as schools, become all the more necessary.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION'S REORGANIZATION

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, earlier today, the Federal Communications Commission Chairman, Kevin Martin, created a new FCC bureau dedicated to public safety and homeland security functions. The new FCC bureau will be named the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and will handle issues that are currently spread over several separate FCC bureaus and offices. For instance, it will handle enhanced 911 calls. It will handle priority emergency services, an emergency alert system, disaster management coordination, and communications infrastructure protection.

My generation relied on radio. Now all of us have different forms of communications. But there was no uniform communication mechanism such as radio was back in the 1930s or 1940s. Chairman Martin's reorganization recognizes the change in the technologies that can be used for emergency communications.

I commend the FCC, under Chairman Martin, for its leadership in directing the Universal Service Program to play a significant role in rebuilding the communications infrastructure, something that they have announced today also. Since its inception, the focus of the Universal Service Program has been on ensuring that all Americans are connected and able to communicate. As the citizens of Louisiana and Mississippi rebuild and return to their homes, they need to know that they can pick up their phones and make a call, which is why we have universal service. The steps that the FCC announced today, giving priority to rebuilding activities using universal service funds will help both in the short and long term.

The FCC is using these universal service funds temporarily to support wireless handsets, coupled with a package of free minutes for evacuees and people still in the affected area that are without telephone service. The FCC is also helping health care providers and the Red Cross shelters by modifying the health care program to double discounts for public and nonprofit health care providers. The FCC is allowing health care providers to submit new or revised universal support applications—requests for the money—for 2005, since their needs have obviously changed.

On the rebuilding front, universal service will help schools reconnect to the Internet, consumers reconnect to